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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 001014

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA A/S TOM SHANNON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/05/2019

TAGS: PGOV KDEM PREL HO

SUBJECT: TFH01: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES NEGOTIATIONS WITH
PRESIDENT ZELAYA AND OAS POLITICAL DIRECTOR VICTOR RICO

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Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b & d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Summary: On October 5, the Ambassador spoke to President Zelaya and reviewed the status of efforts to kick-start negotiations with the Micheletti side. Somewhat more upbeat than in the recent past, Zelaya said he hoped talks could be started this week. He expressed a willingness to negotiate terms beyond the San Jose Accord and gave the time limit for him to be reinstated to the presidency as of the end of October. In a separate conversation, OAS Political Director Victor Rico said that planning for the OAS Foreign Ministers was going well. He said that he was picking up signals that Micheletti was willing to resign his presidency and even potentially consider the return of Zelaya after the elections. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador spoke to President Zelaya the morning of October 5. Zelaya appeared to be more upbeat than in recent conversations. He said he was preparing for the upcoming negotiations with the Micheletti side. He reiterated his interest in preparing a constructive agenda that could result in productive discussions. He reiterated that the basic agenda should include a general acceptance of the San Jose framework, suggested modifications of the San Jose Accord and modalities for the implementation of the agreement, and review of the work of the international Verification Commission and selection of domestic guarantors. He reiterated his interest in achieving a consensus by both sides that the Honduran military should be tasked with guaranteeing the terms of the agreement. The Ambassador responded that this was an issue for both sides to discuss in the talks, but that he did not expect this to be a major point of difference.

¶3. (C) Zelaya expressed a willingness to be flexible and the hope that an agreement could be reached very soon - in the coming two weeks. However, he said the absolute latest for an acceptable deal to be concluded was the end of October, when the military would be seconded to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal. Beyond that date, Zelaya noted that his return to power would be an obstacle to the smooth management of the electoral process. Zelaya did not venture to comment on whether he was willing to agree to terms for his return to the Presidency after the elections of November 29.

¶ 4. (C) The Ambassador also spoke to OAS Political Director Victor Rico. He told the Ambassador that his round of talks with presidential candidates, former presidents, civil society and religious leaders were going well. He said he had also spoken several times to Zelaya.

¶ 5. (C) Rico said he had had an interesting meeting with Micheletti advisor Arturo Corrales yesterday. Corrales told him he had the support of Micheletti in helping promote a negotiated agreement. Corrales also told him that Micheletti wanted to get the dialogue started this week and was willing to resign. Corrales hinted to Toro that Micheletti was also considering permitting Zelaya to return at some point after the elections (although this still needed to be negotiated). Corrales said that Micheletti wanted to promote the Tegucigalpa Accord, not the San Jose Accord, although they were willing to borrow many elements of what was already on the table from the San Jose process.

¶ 6. (C) According to Corrales, with regards to the agenda for the upcoming national dialogue, Micheletti had proposed the following three points:

- 1). Re-establishment of the democratic and constitutional order;
- 2). Establishment of a Political and Social Pact - in place of a constituent assembly - that could include the holding of referenda in 2010 on issues of national interest;
- 3). The General Elections: ensuring strong international support for the elections process.

¶ 7. (C) Rico said that Zelaya himself had established three

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conditions for the holding of the negotiations that included:

- 1). Lifting of the state of siege (this had been done by decision of the Council of Ministers earlier today);
- 2). Regime permission for several of his advisors to be allowed into the Brazilian Embassy to meet with him and help coordinate his strategy in the upcoming negotiations (to include several of his cabinet ministers and members of the pro-Zelaya Resistance movement);
- 3). Reopening of closed media outlets including Channel 36 and Radio Globo.

¶ 8. (C) Rico also said that preparations were going smoothly for the arrival of OAS Foreign Ministers on Wednesday, October 7. He said that Argentine Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana would not be able to attend. He said the OAS was trying to identify a South American foreign minister. The most likely to attend was Ecuadorian Foreign Minister Fander Falconi Benitez.

LLORENS